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THE "ACADEMY" HANGING

THE indignant outcry against the hanging committee of the National Academy of Design is a matter of annual recurrence with each spring exhibition. This time it is even louder than usual. The best places on the line are given to the canvases of the academicians without regard to merit, while the other pictures seem to have been disposed of haphazard, with little further design in view than to cover the walls in the easiest possible way. Willing to be undeceived however as to this presumption, a representative of THE ART AMATEUR was commissioned to call upon the committee and get a straightforward statement as to what principle of selection, if any, had been adopted in the premises, Mr. E. J. Henry responded for the committee in the following very frank explanation:

"Each picture sent to be exhibited was placed before the committee and carefully examined. Those considered worthy were placed on one side, to be hung; those considered unworthy were sent down stairs to be returned to the artists; and others, not altogether bad and not particularly meritorious, were placed in a group together as 'doubtful.' Then, from among the most meritorious pictures, certain large or otherwise important works were selected for 'centres' or places of honor, and were hung in the best places in the rooms for which they were considered best adapted. Around these centres were next arranged works which would harmonize best with the 'centre' and with each other. Sometimes, in order to complete a group, in the whole selection of the best pictures there could not be found a work of just the right size, which would not destroy the general harmony, and in that case it was necessary to call upon the 'doubtful' collection, so that a few pictures of rather negative merit undoubtedly did get better positions than some better pictures which would not fit. We were obliged to economize in space very closely all through, or we never would have been able to hang nearly as many pictures as we did. In fixing the 'centres,' the merit of the work and not the name of the artist gave it the place; but, after the centres were disposed, the committee did strive to give the Academicians fair places upon the line, because that was considered the proper thing to do. There is not any rule of the Academy regarding such matters, as has been asserted, but it is considered right to give the Academicians fair places, because for a long time these men have been the representative artists of America, and if some of them have not advanced with our art, or if some of them through the burden of years are not able to do such work as they once did, they deserve recognition for what they have been and have done, and for their part in helping keep our art alive, and in helping to prepare it for the position it holds to-day. Why, this principle holds good in every country. In England the Royal Academician is always given a good place, no matter though his power utterly fails with age. And every Salon exhibition contains works of old men once popular, but who, now displaced by later favorites, are recalled to mind each year by their pictures 'on the line.' In Paris, when an artist is once 'hors concours,' his work is admitted to the Salon without even being examined by the committee, and is given a place 'on the line' as a matter of course.

"We endeavored to secure the best place possible for each picture, according to merit. I deny that we treated the young men unkindly, as has been asserted, and the walls of the Academy will bear out my statement. I admit that good pictures are there which ought to have better places, and others are there which might as well be absent; but we did the best we could with the material and space at our command."

The chief point of difference then between the public and the managers of the National Academy of Design seems to be as to the right of the latter to peculiar privileges over their fellow-artists. At the first blush there would seem to be some show of reason in Mr. Henry's plea of precedent that similar privileges are conceded to associates at the national academies of England and France. The plea, however, will not bear examination. The original standard of merit for admission to the enjoyment of these privileges is much higher at the Royal Academy and at the Salon than it is at our so-called National Academy. At the Royal Academy an artist must at one time have been a somebody to entitle him now to have his pictures "on the line;" and at the Salon the artist whose picture is "hors concours," if not decorated with the legion of honor, has earned the privilege by virtue of medals he has won. But what have the majority of the managers of the New York National Academy done to merit special privilege of this kind? Nothing. They owe their places of distinction and power solely to the personal good will of their fellows. They have not the ability to distinguish themselves by their works, and can only direct attention to them by usurping positions on the walls of the Academy which by right belong to better men.

THE Cuban sketches of Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith have been exhibited at the Art Students' League, and at the Century, and it is probable the Union League Club will secure them for its water-color exhibition this

present May. "There is no use trying to interest our people in Spanish America," said to the writer, the editor of a leading magazine, "and I simply consider as taboo all subjects of that class." To this the proper reply is, let the right sort of man take hold of them, and then see. In the matter of sketching the Spanish tropics of this continent, Mr. Hopkinson Smith is simply the first artist of competence and spirit who has attempted the task. His budget amounts to about fifty cartoons, half in water-colors and half in charcoal. In aquarelle is the view in the Calle Acosta, Habana, with the archway of an old convent bestraddling the street like the two-horse act of some architectural circus. The Plaza das Armas yields another lively view, and the fishers' quarters at Falua, opposite Habana, shows a picturesque grouping of fishing boats under the shadow of the palm trees and beneath the beetling walls of the Cabanas or Fort. The Bay of Manzan, a pearly and limpid marine study, is one of the best, though it is also one of the hastiest, of these sketches, and the quaint society of mules and muleteers in a patio of Artemesia, in the western part of the island, is amusingly interpreted. The charcoals are particularly good, being in that branch of his art which Hopkinson understands best. These pictorial reports were obtained during a winter trip which the active artist prosecuted in company with Mr. Dana, Mr. Isham, and a party of society people, who travelled approximately in the track of General Grant, were entertained by the same set of planters, and saw thrice a much in a week as is seen in a month by the idle tourist of an empty day.

MY NOTE-BOOK.

MR. FEUARDENT, assisted by Mr. Clarence Cook, The New York Times, and numerous other friends of fair play, continues to make vigorous and telling exposures of the mismanagement which is rapidly destroying the value of the Di Cesnola collection of Cypriote antiquities. A public stereopticon exhibition is now proposed to afford ocular demonstration of the truth of Mr. Feuardent's charges.

VISITORS to Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt's gallery of paintings and sculptures at Sarony's, who call to mind the charming fan decorations in water-colors and paintings in oil, by M. Georges Clairin, which were exhibited there, will be glad to know that they are not to leave the country for a while. A painter and decorative artist of M. Clairin's reputation certainly ought to be better known here than he is. At least, his paintings deserve a better fate than to form, as they have done, a sort of annex to those of his fair pupil. The works of an artist who executed the splendid staircase decoration of the Grand Opera House in Paris and some of the best of the ceiling decorations there, to say nothing of his fine works, pictorial and decorative, in the Museum of Rouen, and the theatre and neat gaming saloon at Monte Carlo, ought to be introduced to the American public under more favorable auspices than as an accessory to the exhibition of a clever amateur.

"THE ADIRONDACK PORTFOLIO" is the title of a collection of charming reproductions by the artotype process of oil studies in black and white made in that paradise of artists by Mr. W. S. Macy.

MRS. EDWARD MORAN, who is always ready with some enterprise for the advancement of the useful objects of the Ladies' Art Association, with which she is prominently identified, recently got up a rapid sketching competition, which took place before a large and fashionable assemblage. The first idea was to have the exhibition solely for the members; but Mrs. Moran, to whom the artists gallantly agreed to present the sketches, preferred to have them sold for the benefit of the association. Hence this unique entertainment, which put over three hundred dollars in their exchequer. There was no charge for admission, which was by invitation only. Sarony gave the use of his gallery, and Messrs. Edward Moran, Camille Piton, Charles Volkmar, Lafayette Seavey, Ion Dabour, J. W. Rough, G. W. Edwards, Napoleon Sarony, W. H. Lippincott and Bruce Crane—all artists of repute—and Mr. Theodore Bauer, the sculptor, furnished the entertainment.

MR. PITON was brave enough to compete in oils, with a full palette. In a wonderfully short time he pro-

duced a picturesque water-mill with figures and cattle in the foreground. The other artists, with the exception of Mr. Dabour, who worked in pastels, and Mr. Volkmar, who painted in black and white, drew in charcoal. Excellent time was achieved by Messrs. Moran and Crane, who had half finished their second sketches while some of their competitors were still engaged on their first. Messrs. Dabour and Volkmar worked with marvellous rapidity. But considering the difficulty of his undertaking, no one deserved more credit than Mr. Bauer, who in forty-five minutes completed in clay a capital bas-relief sketch of Cupid and Psyche. Fifteen minutes was about the average time taken by each artist. The exhibition being ended, Mr. Stephen Massett ("Jeemes Pipes") mounted the platform and, amid much merriment and applause, auctioned off the sketches among the audience. They brought from ten dollars to thirty dollars apiece, averaging just about one dollar a minute for the work of the artist.

THE Prang competition is scarcely over before Messrs. Warren, Fuller & Co. proceed to stir up the decorative artists again by offering two thousand dollars in prizes for the best wall-paper designs, with a supplementary two hundred dollars for the best ceiling decoration. The judges are to be C. Herter, E. C. Moore, and F. Lathrop, and the designs will be exhibited and the awards made next October.

A CONFLICT between the public and the managers of the Metropolitan Museum of Art as to the right of the former to visit that resort on Sunday seems imminent.

THE most important picture sale since my last notes undoubtedly was that at Leavitt's of the paintings belonging to Mr. Beriah Wall, of Providence, R. I. Eight-four canvases were sold for \$48,000; Schreyer's "Advance Guard" bringing \$2900—the largest bid. Pictures which sold for a thousand dollars or more were "Flowers," by Narcisse Diaz, \$2400; "Adoration of Minerva," by Hector Leroux, \$1900; "The Little Sufferer," by Bouguereau, \$1855; "Old Clothes Dealer," by C. Meissonier, \$1500; "Glimpse of a Canal in Venice," by Rico, \$1440; "Cattle at the Seashore," by J. H. L. De Haas, \$1435; "Too Hot," by Meyer Von Bremen, \$1425; "A Dispute with the Parrots," by E. Beaumont, \$1240; "The Swing," by Leon Glaize, \$1030, and "Port of Ostende," by Clays, \$1000.

IT is a common folly of a rich man to buy paintings on his own judgment and with little knowledge, confident that he is making a good investment and that when he dies his collection will sell for much more than it cost him. A good illustration of this fallacy was afforded at the recent sale of the "books, bric-à-brac and paintings" belonging to the estate of the late David Jones, the brewer. The pictures, ninety-five in number—which probably cost him not less than \$40,000—were sold for about \$12,000. The rubbish in the collection, which should have been weeded out, discredited the really good paintings, most of which were sacrificed. "The Alarm," by Schreyer, sold for \$1300; "Waiting," by Kaemmerer, for \$1220, and a capital Verboeckhoven went for \$810. One of Mr. Jones' recent purchases was Thomas Moran's imposing canvas, "Castellated Colorado," for which he paid the artist \$1500—a rebate of \$500 from the "studio price." It was knocked down to a dealer for \$500.

"THE HALT OF THE CAVALIERS," by Meissonier, of which a fine drawing by Mr. Camille Piton was given on the front page of THE ART AMATEUR last November, was sold at the late Wilson sale in Paris for \$25,000 to Mr. J. W. Mackay, the mining millionaire.

IT is not clear what right Bastien-Lepage's fine painting, "Joan of Arc," has in the exhibition at Moore's Gallery among the works of the Society of American Artists. But being there, it should have been placed in a better light. It is well for the feelings of the artist that he is separated by three thousand miles from the scene of his crucifixion. The picture should have been put on an easel by itself in the middle of the gallery.

MONTEZUMA.

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